

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method of preparing an aqueous extract of butter cake meal from a shea butter tree (Butyrospermum parkii), ~~comprising enriched in saponins on basis of waste product from a Shea Butter Tree~~, said method comprising the following steps:

(i) mixing one part by weight of butter cake meal waste product with 4-30 parts by weight of water to form an aqueous suspension;

(ii) adding a sufficient quantity of alkali to the aqueous suspension to create alkaline conditions;

(iii) incubating the ~~mixture~~ alkaline aqueous suspension formed in step (i) ~~(ii) under alkaline conditions (pH > 7) to produce an alkaline aqueous extract enriched in saponins; and~~

~~(iii iv) separating the alkaline aqueous extract from the butter cake meal; and~~

~~(v) recovering isolating the an alkaline aqueous extract comprising enriched in saponins by removing solids from the alkaline mixture formed in step (ii).~~

2. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein the ~~alkaline conditions are obtained by addition of an alkali~~ is in the form of a base and/or an alkaline buffer.

3. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 2, wherein the alkali is selected from the group consisting of: potassium-, sodium-,

calcium-, ammonium-hydroxide or potassium-, sodium-, calcium-, ammonium-, hydroxide carbonate.

4. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the incubation in step (ii) is performed at a pH of 7-14, preferably 7-10.

5. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein the incubation step (ii) is performed ~~at~~ over a temperature of between 15 and 95°C at a period of between 10 minutes and 5 hours.

6. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein solids are removed from the extract in step (iii) by filtration or centrifugation.

7. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, yielding an extract containing at least 1 weight-% dry matter.

8. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the extract obtained in step (iii) is further concentrated and/or purified by evaporation of water and/or ultrafiltration and/or recrystallization.

9. (Withdrawn) A butter tree extract obtainable by the method of claim 1.

10. (Withdrawn) A method of producing an aqueous extract enriched with sapogenins comprising the step of subjecting a saponin containing extract of claim 9 to enzymatic or acid hydrolysis, and thereby obtaining an extract enriched with sapogenins.

11. (Withdrawn) A sapogenin enriched extract obtainable by the method of claim 10.
12. (Withdrawn) An extract of claim 9, wherein the active compounds are chemically modified to increase their solubility in oil.
13. (Withdrawn) Use of an extract of claim 9 as a food additive.
14. (Withdrawn) Use of an extract of claim 9 in the manufacture of a detergent product.
15. (Withdrawn) Use of an extract of claim 9 in the manufacture of a cosmetic product.
16. (Withdrawn) Use of an extract of claim 9 in the manufacture of a pharmaceutical product for topical application.
17. (Withdrawn) Use of an extract of claim 9 in the manufacture of a pharmaceutical product for lowering the level of serum cholesterol in a human being or in other mammals.
18. (Withdrawn) Use of an extract of claim 9 in the manufacture of a pharmaceutical product for treatment of inflammatory diseases.
19. (Withdrawn) Use of an extract of claim 9 in the manufacture of a pharmaceutical product for systemic administration.
20. (Withdrawn) Use of an extract of claim 9 in the manufacture of a nutritional supplement.